

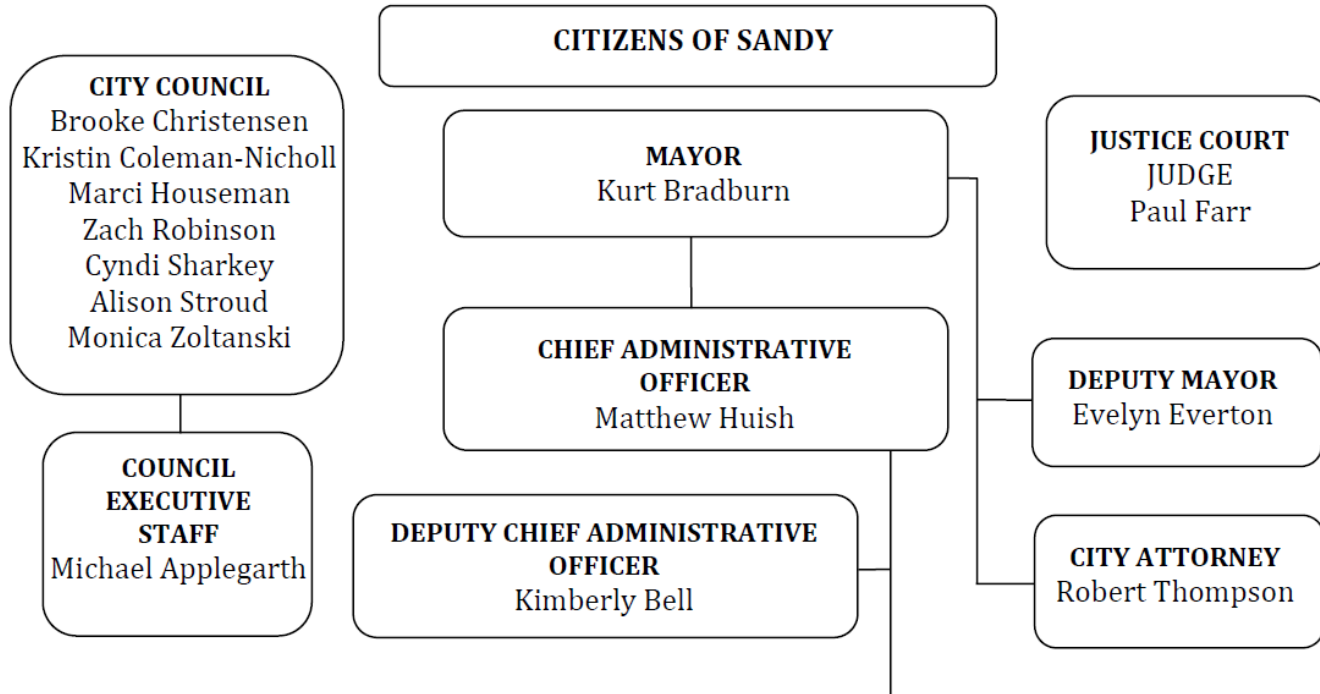


Sandy City Justice Court

Budget Information

December 2020

Third Branch of Government



Justice Court Certification

- The Sandy City Justice Court has the authority to deal with class B and C misdemeanors, violations of ordinances, small claims, and infractions committed within Sandy City boundaries.
- Justice Courts are regulated by state law as well as rules adopted by the Utah Judicial Council which is the policy-making body for the judiciary (Currently, Judge Paul Farr is a sitting member of the Judicial Council).
- Every 4 years, Justice Courts and their city government must certify to the Judicial Council that their court complies with state law and court rules for the operation of a justice Court.
- Court operational standards for certification include aspects such as the court facility standards, indigent defense and prosecution requirements, legal resources required, bailiff and security requirements, jury and witness standards, interpreter standards, education standards, case management, and financial administration.

Personnel Costs

The largest cost for the Sandy City Justice Court is the staff needed to run the court.

The Sandy City Justice Court currently has one Full Time Judge, a Court Administrator, two supervisors and eleven full time clerks and two part time clerks. One part time position is currently vacant.

Regular Pay, Overtime/Gap, Variable Benefits, Fixed Benefits, PTO Disbursement = 2020 Estimated \$1,125,947 out of a total \$1,360,158 budget.

Judicial Services

- **The Sandy City Justice Court is considered a Class I Justice Court due to its size and ranks 5th largest in the State.** The Sandy Justice Court had 12,707 case filings in FY2020. 1,384 were Class B and C Misdemeanors, 715 Small Claims Cases and 10,608 Traffic Cases (*COVID caused a drop in Small Claims and Traffic cases filed from March to June in FY2020).
- **The Sandy City Justice Court is the largest Justice Court operating with a single Judge in the State.** In order to accomplish this the court utilizes standing orders to allow clerks to fast-track common orders, implements a highly efficient court schedule, and uses Judges Pro Tempore (substitute Judges) whenever our Judge uses vacation days or is out for training when possible.

State Assistance

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) also supports the Justice Courts. Some Benefits include:

- Extensive trainings and standardized procedures
- An integrated case management system (including support, management and backup).
- IT support for court software and programs including access to Google Workplace Accounts and Webex Accounts for Jail Videos as well as COVID-19 Court.
- Grants and technology assistance programs, several of which the Sandy City Justice Court has benefited from.
- Use of Office of State Debt Collection to collect past due fines and fees since 2014.

Paperless Court

In 2014 the Justice Court went Paperless for Traffic and Criminal cases and in 2020 the court completed the process to move Small Claims to paperless.

Benefits:

- No need to purchase file folders saving thousands.
- Improved customer service and shorter wait times with all file information available through case management system online.
- When State implements MyCase and ODR to all justice courts Sandy Justice Court will be able to realize full benefit for court patrons.
- Storage no longer needed is in process of being converted to PD Evidence Storage space.

2019 Cost Efficiency Changes

In July of 2019 several changes were implemented to help reduce costs to operate the Sandy City Justice Court including:

- Changes in staff schedules to reduce overtime expenses.
- Changes in training attendance to have more clerks attend local trainings and reduce travel expenses.
- Changes to the court calendar to reduce interpreter costs.
- Beginning process to move Small Claims Cases Paperless which was completed in November 2020.

2020 COVID-19 Challenges

Many of the Court's operations have been affected by COVID-19, although thanks to the CARES Act and additional efforts to reduce costs, the Justice Court had no need to request additional funding in FY2021 and sees FY2022 as likely to have no additional changes at this time.

As of December 1st, 2020 the court's calendar and caseload backlog caused by COVID-19 is down to roughly 2 months for most cases (other than Jury Trials). The court expects to be caught up with this backlog by April 2021.

Budget Priorities for FY2022

- Ensure Compensation for Court staff continues to align with market rates.
- Maintain existing appropriation levels to best serve our community as the local Justice Court.

If you have questions, please
contact me at:

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CREDITS

- www.utcourts.gov
- FY2020 Utah Courts Caseload Data
(<https://www.utcourts.gov/stats/>)
- Sandy City Approved Budget Fiscal Year 2020-2021